MYSTICISM IN RICHARD CRASHAW'S STEPS TO THE TEMPLE AND CARMEN DEO NOSTRO

A THESIS

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PREFACE

Indirectly, the genesis of this thesis was many years ago, when as a child I watched many individuals in church suddenly "moved" by the Holy "spirit." At that time this seemed a playful thing to me, but as I grew older and understood more, I began to wonder about the sincerity of these people, and whether or not they realy experienced that Holy Ghost that, according to Christian doctrine, Christ promised to send back as a Comforter. Time and time again, while in church, I laughed at these individuals when they uttered such spontaneous utterances as "Glory, Glory," "Bless His name," "Thank you, Jesus," "You are so sweet," and "Yes, Lord."

Then I knew nothing about mysticism, but as I look back now, I am convinced that some of these persons experienced genuine religious ecstasy -- what to them must have been a moment of unquestionable Reality. If it was not the Holy Ghost that moved them, certainly it was no ordinary human emotion.

Psychologists, psychiatrists, and psychoanalysts have sought to minimize these occurences, but none, as far as I know, has given satisfactory answers to explain them. Recently, they have admitted reluctantly that there is "some other thing." Generally, however, people have frowned upon those churchgoers who are moved by the "spirit," and have given them such names as "Holy Rollers" and "Sanctified people," without trying to understand them.

One purpose of this thesis, therefore, was to try to discover through Crashaw's poetry if one could actually experience the Absolute. More specifically, I have sought to show what characterizes Crashaw's mysticism and how it is set forth in his poetry.

In Chapter I an attempt is made to discover the sources of the mysticism of Crashaw. Chapter II is concerned with the nature of his mysticism. Chapter III deals with his poetic technique as related to his mysticism. It is followed by a summary of the findings in the three previous chapters.

I wish to express my sincere thanks to Dr. Thomas D. Jarrett for his periodic critical evaluations of this essay while it was in preparation as well as for his valuable suggestions. I also owe thanks to him for my knowledge of thesis-writing, without which, I am sure, this discourse would have been difficult to complete. I am also indebted to Mrs. Marnesba Hill of the Trevor Arnett Library of Atlanta University for ordering books for me through the Inter-Library Loan Service; and Mrs. Mable L. Johnson and Mrs. Melzetta P. Laws of the West Hunter Branch Library in Atlanta, Georgia, for securing books from the Carnegie Library of Atlanta.

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CHAPTER I

THE SOURCES OF CRASHAW'S MYSTICISM

Science revolutionized the seventeenth century. Inventions and discoveries were numerous, and the result was an upheaval. These inventions and discoveries caused man to question many things in religious matters which he had accepted traditionally. Man began to search for the truth, and as he sought the truth, he turned more and more to science for proof, until he became materialistic. Increased knowledge of the universe made it impossible for man to believe in many things he had faith in before. Moreover, the church under went a violent change.

This upheaval came from three things: material prosperity, intellectual expansion and well-being, and freedom of thought unknown before. The discovery of the New World had opened up avenues to wealth and set the stage for other discoveries. This wealth gave internal peace to England, which fostered trade. Internal trade increased, and the result was prosperity. Furthermore, much of the wealth of the Church passed into private hands who kept it permanently.[1]

In addition, the expansion of knowledge played its part. For as W. K. Fleming notes,

> The Renaissance,a century before, had unrolled before men's minds the forgotten wealth of the classics: the discoveries of Copernicus, revolutionizing all former astronomical ideas, the voyages of Columbus, Cabot, Anerigo, and other daring explorers upsetting all former geographical notions, had literally brought around men a new heaven and a new earth. The progress of science began, or rather started afresh, after centuries of uneasy slumber....[2]

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[1] W. K. Fleming, Christianity in Mysticism (London, 1913), pp. 181-83.

[2] Ibid., p. 181.

The telescope developed and revolutionized man's idea of his relation to the universe and God by confirming the Copernican theory physically. The Ptolemaic theory had made earth and man the focal point of God's attention, and space was limited and accounted for in ten concentric spheres. Bruno, interpreting the Copernican theory, showed that man was but on one universe out of many whirling in illimitable space. This disturbed man's mind.

The Copernican theory was thought to be contrary to the Scriptures, because it changed the location of heaven and hell and desecrated the literal interpretation of numerous passages of Scripture, which were used against it. Stars, which were supposed to govern man's fate, were found to be other worlds. Comets, thought of as a forewarning of death or disaster, were discovered to have a place in the universe; their supernatural powers disappeared. Speculation about other creatures in these worlds arose. Were they competing for God's attention too? it was asked.

In addition to these changes wrought by the telescope, the microscope also changed man's thought about himself and his world. The microscope revealed to man things about his body he never thought of, and allowed him to see organisms which he never dreamed existed. These discoveries, which undermined the teachings of the Scriptures, caused a general spirit of melancholy to prevail.

There were advancements in mathematics too, and the application of its laws were felt. For, as Robert Brinkley writes,

> The application of mathematical laws to the phenomena of motion led men to see that nature operated by laws which could be depended upon as invariable and to question

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[1]Robert F. Brinkley (ed.), English Poetry of the Seventeenth Century (New York, 1942), p. 4.

> whether God were necessary to the mechanism of the universe.[1]

The result of this conflict between science and religion was mental confusion as well as free thought. Roberta Brinkley states that

> In this mental confusion which resulted from the conflict between science and religion, some found a safe retreat in mysticism, where the individual could depend upon the personal experience of religious ecstasy instead of upon the evidence of his senses.[2]

This retreat from the conflict between science and religion is one source of Crashaw's mysticism, for the conflict did not bother him as it did Donne or Herbert. Furthermore, it is likely that he was one who kept "true to Divine things, anxious for Divine guidance."[3] In fact, Crashaw cared for nothing but the comfort of the spirit. And as Holliday states:

> Crashaw's was a life without storms, seemingly without spiritual conflict. All his days were filled with a childlike faith in a beneficent Creator, and while others struggled onward through anguish and tears to their eternal crown, his soul soared with never a doubt, never a self depreciation, never a lapse from joyous and even raptuous belief.... He was simply a glad-hearted devotee.[4]

For after his retreat from the conflict of science and religion, he sought more and more the Divine things. He also decided that he would devote his whole life to God, and yearning for the divine led him to pray and meditate to experience the Holy One.

Another mainspring of Crashaw's mysticism is to be found in his religious

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1. Brinkley, op. cit., p. 4.
2. Ibid., p. 5.
3. Fleming, op. cit., p. 182.
4. Carl Holliday, The Cavalier Poets (New York, 1911), p. 111.

training. His father, William Crashaw, "was a rigorous Puritan, the enemy of the theater and other worldly pastimes...."[1] Macaulay, writing about the Puritans, says this:

> The Puritans were men whose minds had derived a peculiar character from the daily contemplation of superior beings and eternal interests. Not content with acknowledging, in general terms, an over ruling Providence, they habitually ascribed every event to the will of the Great Being, for whose power nothing was too vast, for whose inspection nothing was too minute. To know Him, to serve Him, to enjoy Him was to them the great end of existence.[2]

This was the type of atmosphere Richard Crashaw was brought up in in the impressionable years of childhood. He was taught to love and pray and honor the house of God, for William Crashaw thought that the house of the Lord should be solemnly and decently dedicated to God by consecration before worshiping in it. This, the father instilled in the son so that, later, the son loved the church.

To love, pray, and honor the house of God were things that Crashaw never forgot. Love no doubt always made him think of God, Who was so loving that He allowed His Son to die for us. And through prayer, he surely thanked God. But through prayer and his love for the Lord's house, he sought more from God because he learned that prayer was an attempt to communicate with God. He also felt within himself that God would visit him in the church: "Where two or three are gathered in my name, there will I be also." This caused him to visit God's house to pray and meditate, and to enjoy God's presence.

Moreover, Crashaw's father must have taught him to respect ecclesiastical

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[1]Austin Warren, Richard Crashaw, A Study in Baroque Sensibility (Louisiana State Press, 1939), p. 19.

[2]Thomas B. Macaulay, Essay on Milton, as quoted by G. B. Woods, H. A. Watt, and G. K. Anderson, The Literature of England: An Anthology and a History (2 vols.; Atlanta, 1947), I, 570.

and ancient tradition. For William Crashaw preached:

> Woe to him... that despiseth his Godly Pastor and learned teacher, for he despiseth the means and minister of his salvation, and the very dust that cleaves the ministers feet shall be a witness.... To testify the due deserved damnation to such caitiffs.[1]

A minister who preached that way to his congregation surely must have talked to his son similarly.

To love, to honor, to pray, and to follow ecclesiastical and ancient tradition, all of these helped to lead Crashaw to a contemplative life. "To enjoy Him?" Yes: Direct communion with God is all one needs to know, and this can be secured through contemplation--a basic step in mystical experience.

A third cause of Crashaw's mysticism was his reading. He read the works of the Church fathers and the biography of several of the saints. This reading may have started in his father's library. For though William Crashaw denounced the reading of Catholic books, his own bookshelves are well furnished with Catholic books. Not only did he have many Catholic books in his library, but he took the task of translating some for the "edification and use" of the Protestants.[2] And as Watkin writes: "A boy of Crashaw's alert intelligence and strong religious interest presumably made his first acquaintance with Catholic theology in his father's library."[3] It is true that William Crashaw had filled his library with Catholic books so that he could

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[1] William Crashaw, "The Parable of Prison," as quoted by E. I. Watkin, Poets and Mystics (New York, 1953), p. 172.

[2] Watkins, op. cit., p. 181.

[3] Ibid.

get information to fight the Catholics, but his son was attracted and influenced in quite a contrary way. For his reading led him to believe in the symbols of the Catholic Church as well as to imitate practices of the Church Fathers and the mystics.

Having been taught to respect ecclesiastical tradition, Crashaw felt close affinity to the Church Fathers. Gregory's teaching perhaps had its effect. He taught that "Divine nature" is born within through baptism and sacraments--"The bread and the wine are Divine body and blood ...."[1] He made the Church the city of God on earth. The Church, with its mysterious sacraments, because the indispensable channel of Divine Grace.[2]

St. Augustine's "Confessions" undoubtedly affected him, too. For love runs from the beginning to the end of his "Confessions"--love, where God shines upon the soul, Crashaw's song. The symbolism that the sacraments held for him later in the mighty Roman Church might very well have started in his father's library. His preoccupation with Divine love, the Incarnation, and Christ in the Catholic vein seems to indicate that.

If Crashaw was not influenced by the Church Fathers from his reading in his father's library, he was when he went to college. For he took a keen interest in ecclesiastical matters at Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, also at the college of Peterhouse in Cambridge he read deeply in the Church Fathers. Indeed, the early Church Fathers were mystics, and Crashaw must have felt eternity itself if he read:

> It is impossible to live without life, but the means
> of life come from participation in God. But participation

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[1] Rufus M. Jones, Studies in Mystical Religion (London, 1923), p. 86.

[2] Ibid., p. 88.

> in God is to see God and to enjoy His goodness.... The glory of God is a living man, AND THE LIFE OF MAN is the vision of God.[1]

And when he read the words of the saints, he must have felt God himself.

The biography of the saints he surely read. Gosse states that

> He has read the passionate canticles of St. John of the Cross, the books of the Carmelite nun, St. Teresa, and all the other rosy and fiery contributions to ecclesiastical literature laid by Spain at the feet of the Pope during the closing decades of the sixteenth century.[2]

those he surely read. And his knowledge of Spanish and Italian helped him here. The reading of the biography of the Spanish and Italian mystics fed his own strain of mysticism. And as Hebel and Hoyte note: "Contemplation of the life of Teresa seems to have been Crashaw's ladder to mystical experience."[3] For in these readings Crashaw found his "ideal and his hope in St. Teresa,[4] and he tried to emulate her life. There is little doubt, if any at all, that Crashaw did not try to follow St. Teresa as he followed Nicholas Ferrar. Do we not work to parallel our ideal person--dead or alive?

Devotional and reverential practices were determinants of his mysticism, too. As indicated before, Crashaw's father had instilled in him deep religious respect for ecclesiastical authority and tradition, which was furthered by his reading. Respect for authority he never let depart from him. He carried this with him when he entered college.

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1 Clement, Against Heresies, Book V, Chapt. I, Sec. I, as quoted by Rufus M. Jones, op. cit., p. 81.

2 Edmund Gosse, Seventeenth Century Studies (London, 1914), p. 169.

3 J. William Hebel and Hoyt H. Hudson (eds.), Poetry of the Renaissance, 1509-1660 (New York, 1934), p. 1042.

4 Felix E. Schelling (ed.), Seventeenth Century Lyrics (Athenaeum Press Series; Boston, 1899), Introduction, p. ii.

Therefore, it is not surprising to find him worshipping in Little St. Mary's Chapel at the college of Peterhouse in Cambridge, perhaps more than any other person at the college. He felt that he had found a union in the Catholic Church through its symbolism in worship.

Moveover, he made several journeys to little Gidding, just outside Cambridge,

> which drew him move and more to the observance of watching, fasting, /and/ praying in the late hours of the night.[1]

Martin quotes Peckard as follows:

> Several religious persons both in the neighborhood, and from distant places, attended these watchings; and amongst these the celebrated Mr. Rich. Crashaw, Fellow of Peterhouse, who was very intimate with the family, and frequently came from Cambridge for this purpose, and at his return often watched in Little St. Mary's Church near Peterhouse.[2]

From these devotional and reverential practices through the symbolism he found in the Catholic Church, Crashaw developed a desire for union with his Lord. Direct communion with God is all one needs to know, and this can be secured through meditation and contemplation. Consequently, Crashaw began to meditate religiously more and more.

This meditation and contemplation was furthered by Nicholas Ferrar, the founder of Little Gidding, a religious community. For

> the spirit of this leader profoundly affected Richard Crashaw, ...that after 1638 the young poet devoted little

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1 Edwin Mins, The Christ of the Poets (New York, 1948), p. 85.

2 P. Peckard, Memoirs of the Life of Nicholas Ferrar (Cambridge, 1790), quoted by L. C. Martin, The Poems, English, Latin, and Greek, of Richard Crashaw (Oxford, 1927), Introduction, p. xxiv.

> of his time and energy to aught else save religious meditations and religious activities.[1]

Ferrar impressed Crashaw so, that Crashaw tried to imitate him in the Church and chapel at Cambridge.[2] These practices turned him into the way of the mystic.

Let us look at Nicholas Ferrar briefly to note the kind of person Crashaw was imitating. Ferrar was a very religious person that retired from the merchant world to organize Little Gidding into a religious community. Here, he held service three times daily in the little church outside the manor house, and divided duties for the members of the community for each day. Moreover, every night a watch was kept from nine to one, during which two men or women recited the entire Psalter. Ferrar watched two nights a week, and when he did not watch, he got up at one o'clock in the morning to spend the remaining hours of the night in prayer and meditation.

While Nicholas Ferrar's mother lived, he at least ate enough to sustain his body. But after her death, he ate little, not enough to keep a healthy body though, and he never slept in bed again but in sackcloth on the floor. His whole life thereafter was prayer and meditation. This was the person Crashaw wished to imitate.

Finally, Crashaw's nature itself might have played a part. For he inherited from his father his devotional temper.[3] And his nature seemed to be alien to this world. This very likely was true because two interests dominated his life: religion and religious art. Besides, he cared for

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1 Holliday, op. cit., p. 111.

2 Gosse, op. cit., p. 165.

3 Watkin, op. cit., p. 136.

nothing but the comfort of the spirit.

We may say then that Crashaw's mysticism can be traced to at least five things: his retreat from the conflict between science and religion, religious training, reading, devotional and reverential practices and his nature.

CHAPTER II

THE NATURE OF THE MYSTICISM IN CRASHAW'S POETRY

As the little water-drop poured into a large measure of wine seems to lose its own nature entirely and to take on both the color and the taste of wine or as iron heated red-hot loses its own appearance and glows like fire; or as air filled with sunlight is transformed into the same brightness so that it does not so much appear to be illuminated as to be light itself--so must all human feeling towards the Holy One be self dissolved in unspeakable wise, and wholly transfused into the will of God. For how shall God be all in all if anything of man remains in man? The substance will indeed remain, but another glory, another power.

St. Bernard, De diligende Deo

Mysticism in its inmost motive is religious. It displays a predominantly speculative bent, taking the symbolism of religion literally true, and straining after the present realization of an indescribable union. It maintains the possibility of direct intercourse with the Absolute One in which the individual becomes partaker of the Divine. God ceases to be an object to the individual and becomes an experience.

Most poets who have written of such experiences seem to have done so after the event, when the conscious intuition of contact had passed and been replaced by poetic intuition of significant forms suggesting what they cannot express.[1] As the editors of the Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse observe,

> By the rhythm and the glamor of their verse,
> by its peculiar quality of suggesting infinitely
> more than it ever says directly, by its very elasticity,
> they struggle to give what hints they may of Reality
> that is eternally underlying all things.[2]

Such is Crashaw's case. And it is the hints in his poetry that we partially

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[1] Watkin, op. cit., p. 15.

[2] D. H. S. Nicholson and A. H. E. Lee (eds.), The Oxford Book of English Mystical Verse (Oxford, 1932), Introduction, p. viii.

find that constitute his mysticism.

But to understand the mysticism of Crashaw, one has to consider some elements in the seventeenth century as well as some incidents in his life. As Martz notes,

> ...During the first half of the seventeenth century, ...continental works of meditation poured into England, through English translations and adaptations made by both recusants abroad and Anglicans at home.[1]

He discovered that

> In the middle of the sixteenth century, under the stimulus of the Counter Reformation and its spearhead, the Jesuit Order, new treatises on meditation began to appear by the dozens, and after the opening of the seventeenth century, by the scores and by the hundreds.[2]

They poured into England because internal controversies had virtually shut out devotional life. Consequently, the people of England developed a deep inner need. And English religious poetry of the seventeenth century, which flourished at the same time as meditation,[3] shows the impact of the continental and of meditation, and the inner need of the people is mirrored in the poetry through its devotional nature.

Among these books came three of the most popular meditative treatises--from Spain, the Book of Prayer and Meditation (1554) by Fray Luis de Granada; from Italy, Spiritual Combat (1589) by Lorenzo Scupoli; and from France, Introduction to a Devout Life (1609) by Francious de Sales.[4] These popular treatises set the rules for practice of the art of meditation, which has been

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1 L. L. Martz, Poetry of Meditation (New Haven, 1954), p. 7.

2 Ibid., p. 5.

3 Ibid., p. 1.

4 Martz, op. cit., p. 5-6.

defined as

> ...nothing else but a diligent and forcible application of the understanding, to seek and know, and as it were to taste some divine matter....[1]

During this time, meditation was regarded as an almost indispensable preparation for the achievement of the highest mystical state, and several terms were used for the practices and exercises. They were called "contemplation," "meditation," "mental prayer," "prayer," "consideration," "good thoughts," "examination of conscience," and "spiritual exercises." However, the two most commonly known were "meditation" and "contemplation." They meant practically the same thing. Martz concludes in his study of meditative literature of the seventeenth century that there is no difference between the two. "Meditation and contemplation flow together."[2]

Though the terms varied with the practices, the exercises for meditation were similar. These steps were to be followed in the order as outlined, if the person wanted to reach the mystical state. The individual was instructed to follow the exercises at least two or three times a day or an hour. For just as one would practice hitting a baseball to learn to hit, it was thought that one should exercise to reach the mystical state. These periodic exercises each day were to assure one of being in the right mood to grasp a glimpse of eternity.

What did they meditate on? How did they meditate? And what caused them to meditate? Answers to these questions follow.

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[1] Richard Gibbons, "The Practical Methods of Meditation," prefixed to Gibbon's translation: An Abridgement of Meditations of the Life, Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Written in Italian by the R. Father Vincentius Bruno of the Society of Jesus. [St. Omer], 1614, quoted by Martz, op. cit., p. 99.

[2] Martz, op. cit., Introduction, p. 16.

Those persons who meditated chose religious subjects. ("Profane motives carry the soul away from God, while the soul's essence, devotion, longs for another, greater object.")[1] It could be on the life of Christ, the Blessed Virgin, the Resurrection, the Passion, the Sacraments, or the Saints. No matter what it was, the meditator was to picturize a scene, imagining that he was present, that the event was occurring presently before him or that what was being imagined was happening in his own heart. The image formed was called composition. With the composition before him the meditator was then to ask God to grant his wishes and desires. But the petition was to be in accordance with the subject matter. For example, if the contemplation was on the Resurrection, the petition should have been to ask for joy with Christ rejoicing triumphantly over death. While he asked God to grant his desires, the image of the scene in his mind was to remain before him. Then the meditator went through and actually felt what happened at the time of the scene he had imagined. So, if he imagined Christ on the Cross suffering and God sending his glory from heaven to surround His Son, he suffered and enjoyed the presence of God. "The incentive offered ... was the possibility of achieving the highest reaches of mystical experience."[2]

With the illusionment, controversies, and hostility in England at the time, many had only their God to turn to. In many cases, people were not even allowed to worship as they wished to. Consequently, meditation might have been their only alternative, and union with God their only hope here.

However, not everyone drawn by the incentive reached the mystical state.

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1 Martz, op. cit., p. 54.

2 Ibid., p. 18.

For, as Martz further notes,

> Meditation may end with a state of "devotion"; [or] it may go beyond this into something very close to a state of mystical contemplation; and it is certainly true in portions of the work of Crashaw ... we seem to touch the state of mystical "recollection" ....[1]

It is indeed in these "portions of the work of Crashaw" that we find find his mysticism which resulted from meditation. But to ascertain this, one should know that Crashaw practiced the art of meditation. This is known because he followed Nicholas Ferrar, who renounced all worldly ambitions to live not for this world but for the world to which there is no end. Moreover, as Holliday notes in his study of Cavalier poets,

> The spirit of this leader profoundly affected Richard Crashaw, and we find that after 1638 the young poet devoted little of his time and energy to aught else save religious meditations and religious activities.[2]

Furthermore, as stated in the preface to Steps to the Temple, "Like a primitive saint, he offered more prayers in the night, than others usually offered in the day ...."[3] And he had read the lives of the Saints as well as other religious literature, which he imitated. The spirit of these had become his. Especially had he learned to love and imitate St. Teresa. In fact, he tried to duplicate her life. Therefore, in his poetry will be found ecstasy; but allied with this ecstasy is his mysticism.

This is seen in his method of reaching the state of ecstasy. For, just as the saints and others that meditated followed the memory, the understanding, and the will to identify themselves with God, so did Crashaw. Memory,

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[1] Martz, op. cit., Introduction, p. 20.

[2] Holliday, op. cit., p. 111.

[3] "Preface," Steps to the Temple, ed. by A. R. Waller (Cambridge, 1914), p. 68.

understanding, and will form the three-fold image of God. One had to move from memory, to understanding, and thence to the will before being fused with the One. Consequently, the starting point was the memory and the other steps had to be completed for the union. These were the necessary steps in the art of meditation, although these were subsidiary ones.

Some of Crashaw's poems follow the art of meditation. And, in several instances, he did not stop at mere devotion but reached the mystical state. The procedure required study and a forseen movement according to the "three powers of the soul": the memory, the understanding, and the will.[1] And it is in the final stage, the will ("Thither [toward God], one journeyeth not in ships, nor in chariots, nor on foot; for to journey, nay, even to arrive there, is nothing else but to will to go.")[2] that we glimpse one form of the mysticism of Crashaw.

In the memory state, one states a fact, makes an announcement or asks a question. One recalls a religious subject of which an image is formed. The meditator dwells on this image, trying to really feel it and understand it--the second step. In this stage, the individual begins to feel something "Transcendental," but can explain it only to the understanding. Thus, the individual in the memory stage forms the picture, and in the understanding phase, he tries to recall things that occurred surrounding the imaginary composition or image. He uses his imagination in the second phase to bring about every possible thing to understand the full meaning of the image. Torrents of emotion rush upon him. He desires that the same thing(s) happen

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[1] Martz, op. cit., p. 34.

[2] St. Augustine, Confessions, p. 148, quoted by Rufus M. Jones, op. cit., p. 91.

to him that happened at the actual time of the scene imagined. The emotions cause him to gather up all of his powers to concentrate only on the scene. And then the meditator wills himself to a determined state of attention -- the function of the will. Finally, he moves into a state to experience Reality. Madame Guyon, after being pierced by "a profound wound ... of delight and love," says this:

> It was an orison of joyous possession in the Will, where the taste of God was so great, pure, and simple that it attracted and absorbed the two other powers of the soul....[1]

So, through this three-fold method of meditation, one reached a mystical state.

Crashaw's poetry follows the structure discussed above. Take, for example, "A hymn to the Name and Honor of the Admirable Saint Teresa." At the outset, the poet states the subject he is going to meditate upon, telling what the image will be formed on.

> Love, thou art Absolute sole Lord
> Of Life and Death. To prove thy word
> Wee'l now appeal to none of all
> Those thy old Souldiers, Great and tal,
> Ripe men of Martyrdom, that could reach down
> With strong armes, their triumphant crown,
> Such as could with lusty breath
> Speak lowd into the face of death
> Their Great Lord's glorious name, to hone
> Of those whose spatious Bosomes spread a throne
> For Love at large to fill, spare blood and sweat;
> And see him take a private seat,
> Making his mansion in the mild
> And milky soul of a soft child.

After announcing what the image will be formed on, Crashaw uses his imagination to understand that which the saint has gone through or experienced. He

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[1]"Madame Guyon," p. 36, quoted in Evelyn Underhill's Mysticism (New York, 1926), p. 223.

feels that by understanding all that she has suffered and enjoyed, he will be drawn closer to God. So, he dwells on her life, piling image upon image centered around St. Teresa's life. Furthermore, he conceives that St. Teresa has gone where the "Angels" and the "King" are--"Heav'n."

Having recalled the particulars of her life and the feeling that he now understands, form a "transcendental feeling," why she is in heaven, he concludes:

> and so
> Thou with the Lamb, thy Lord, shalt goe;
> And whereso' ere he setts his white
> Stepps, walk with Him those ways of light
> Which who in death would live to see,
> Must learn in life to dy like the.

Accordingly, he feels that by meditating on her life, he could die (the mystical death) here and have some taste of glory expected in the hereafter.

Thus, the "Hymn" follows the meditative structure. For after announcing the subject he proposes to meditate on, Crashaw recalls all of the things which St. Teresa has done to convert souls to God; that is, he recalls all part of her life and her work in particular. Having done this, he imagines her as entering the courts of heaven and being welcomed by thousands of crowned souls who will themselves be her crown. And if he imagined himself present in the spot where the event occurred, if he imagined the events as occurring before his eyes in the very place that he was, or if he imagined that everything he meditated upon occurred in his own heart, he felt the presence of the Divine.

Not only does this poem follow the meditative (to reach the mystical state) but its sub-title is suggestive. The sub-title is "A Woman for Angelicall height of speculation...." The term "speculation" suggests meditation,

for as we have noticed, it was one of the terms used for meditation. And it is highly conceivable that Crashaw used a synonym for meditation just as we use synonyms for several of our words today.

The same is true of "The Flaming Heart." Here Crashaw announces the subject that he will meditate upon--"The Book and Picture of the Seraphicall Saint Teresa, as She is Usually Expressed With a Seraphim besie her." Once his subject is chosen, he imagines all things that he can conceive of in detail surrounding the event that was supposed to have occurred. Finally, in the last fifteen lines of the poem, he asks passionately that through her life he may experience the Eternal. And if he "read" her life as he asked, which he expected to do through contemplation, it is conceivable that he experienced Absolute Reality.

What has been said of the "Hymn to Saint Teresa" and "The Flaming Heart" is also true of other poems in Crashaw's Carmen Deo Nostro poems. And as Austin Warren states:

> There are but five or six of Crashaw's poems which may fairly be called mystical: the three devoted to St. Teresa, the "Song" printed directly after the "Flaming Heart" and obviously belonging to the same sequence; and the two odes addressed to a young gentle woman: "Prayer ..." and "To the Same Party Council Concerning her Choice."[1]

But equally as true is the fact that there are mystical elements interspersed throughout other poems of his. Observe the following from "To the Name Above Every Name, the Name of Jesus. A Hymn."

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[1] Austin Warren, "The Mysticism of Richard Crashaw," The Symposium, IV (1933), 153.

> Bring hither thy whole Self; and let me see
> What of thy Parent Heav'n yet speaks in thee.

And

> Goe, Soul, out of thy Self, and seek for More.

Or

> The soul that tasts thee take from thence
> How many unknown Worlds there are
> Of Comfort ...

This same poem Martz found to be identical with a document of the seventeenth century that gave exercises for meditation.[1]

Besides, in "Charitas Nimia or the Dear Bargain," we find that after Crashaw has brooded over the price Christ had to pay for us, he says:

> O my Savior, make me see
> How dearly Thou hast payd for me
> That lost again my life may prove
> As then in Death, so now in Love.

And in "Sancta Maria Dolorum or the Mother of Sorrows," we hear the mystic cry:

> O let me suck the wine
> So long of this chast vine
> Till drunk of the dear wonds, I be
> A lost Thing to the World, as it to me.

Such examples of mystic elements as these may be found in the same poems as well as others.

Crashaw's treatment of "the wound of love" gives light on his mysticism, too. According to Austin Warren,

> The Wound of Love is an advanced mystical state in which God pierces the soul with such darts of fire that pain and joy are simultaneous and of equal strength; joy,

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[1] Martz, op. cit., pp. 331, 352.

> because of the soul cannot love God as he deserves, because God's visitations are temporary--succeeded by drought, because the body cannot endure the strain put upon it by intense spiritual states, because the soul longs for death and perfect union with its Spouse.[1]

The saints treat "the wound" as spiritual. St. Teresa, who Crashaw followed, treats it that way. And St. Francis of Sales has this to say speaking of the wound of love:

> This is admirable in the wounds received from the love, that this pain is delightful; and all that feel it, consent to it, and would not change this paine for all the pleasures of the world. There is no paine in love, or if any, it is a beloved one.[2]

So St. Francis of Sales considers "the wound of love" as spiritual, too, from God.

Crashaw's treatment is similar. An echo of it is found in some of his poems. He writes:

> He is the Dart
> . . . . . .
> A Dart thrice dip't in that rich flame
> Which writes thy spouse's radiant Name

He continues,

> O how oft shalt thou complain
> Of sweet and subtle Paine.
> Of intolerable Joyes;
> . . . . . .
> How kindly will thy gentle Heart
> Kiss the sweetly-killing Dart!
> And close in his embraces keep
> Those delicious Wounds, that weep
> Balsom to heal themselves with.[3]

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[1] Austin Warren, "The Mysticism of Richard Crashaw," op. cit., p. 149.

[2] Ibid., p. 151.

[3] "Hymn to ... Saint Teresa," ll. 79, 81, 82, 105-7, 113-17.

Thus, Crashaw, like the mystics, would rather be rid of the pain; but if the wound is necessary for joy, he would graciously take the dart, be healed, and wounded again for such an intimate feeling with the One. Consequently, as he notes in "The Flaming Heart,"

> ... In love's field was never found
> A nobler weapon than a Wound.
> Love's passives are his active'st part,
> The wounded is the wounding heart.
> . . . . . .
> Live here great Heart; and love and dy and kill
> And bleed and wound; and yield and conquer still.[1]

Truly, the mystic's cry is heard in these words, for being "wounded" by the "wounding heart," he experienced union with his Lord. Thus, he cries to his Love, God, to wound again and again so that he may "yield" his whole will to God's. Because the joy is momentary, he wants this wound over and over. (It must be understood that he mystic suffers excruciating pain). Joy and pain balance each other in the mystic.

The mystic Crashaw speaks again in the following words:

> O Love, I am thy sacrifice.
> . . . . . .
> Through still I dy, I live again
> Still longing to be still slain,
> . . . . . .
> For while thou sweetly slayest me,
> Dead to my selfe, I live in Thee.[2]

This is mysticism, for to be dead to oneself is not to be conscious of one's own existence. This, according to the mystics, is necessary for the union because the will of the individual must be given to the will of God. And to

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[1] "The Flaming Heart," ll. 71-74, 79-80, 115-16.

[2] "A Song," ll. 5, 9-10, 15-16.

be unconscious of self, yet living, presupposes that the individual must be living in something. What is this something? God, and only God, or the Absolute Being. And finally, Crashaw says,

> O teach those wounds to bleed
> In me ...
> By all those strings
> Of love, sweet bitter things,
> Which these torn hands transcribed on thy true heart
> O teach mine to the art
> To study him so, till we mix
> Wounds; and become one crucifix.[1]

Therefore, in his statements about the "wound of love," we gleam portions of the indescribable that Crashaw hinted at. He begs to be wounded because it causes him to have a personal experience with his God. Consequently, the wound he speaks of is like the mystics, not physical but spiritual.

Love is thought of in another way, too, and it gives insight into his mysticism also. For love to him is both master of life and death; it is divine. "Love, thou art Absolute sole Lord/ Of Life and Death." Love to him also includes martydom. He states that "'Tis Love, not Yeares or Limbs that can,/ Make the Martyr, or the man." So love reigns over all. Love is God to him. For love to the mystic is a deep seated tendency towards its source; it is the will and desire for the Absolute. And through love, the mystic believes that he can experience Reality.

As a result, we find in "The Flaming Heart," after Crashaw has dwelled on St. Teresa's life of love and devotion, that he says:

> By all thy dowr of Light and Fires;
> By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;
> By all the lives and deaths of love;
> By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
> And by that thirsts of love more large than they;

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[1] "Sancta Maria Delorum or the Mother of Sorrows," ll. 51-52, 95-100.

. . . . . .
By the full kingdome of that finall kisse
That seiz's the parting Soul, and seal'd thee his;
. . . . . .
By all of Him we have in Thee;
Leave nothing of my Self in me.
Let me so read thy life, that I
Unto all life of mine may dy.[1]

Here is mysticism, for Crashaw feels that by contemplating on St. Teresa's life, and particularly the "picture of the seraphicall Saint Teresa," who had reached the ultimate union, he would be able to do the same by concentrating on her life through meditation. Thus, he cries, "Let me so read thy live, That I/ Unto all life of mine may dy," because he believes that she has all of the love in her that Christ possessed. "Read Him for and her for him." In other words, Crashaw says, "Let me be unaware, unconscious of physical existence. Let me be as you are on the picture beside the seraphim, in complete union with my God and Master--the Source of my being, my love, my Spouse. Therefore, through love, he feels that he can experience the Source of his being.

No wonder that in many instances, he wants to partake of the sorrow, suffering, and death of Christ. Could it be that he believed

> ... God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him should not perish but have everlasting life?[2]

If so, Watkin's statement is certainly true: "Sorrow, suffering, death, are but expressions and victories of Love" for Crashaw.[3] For through Christ's

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1 "The Flaming Heart," ll. 94-98, 101-2, 105-8.

2 John 3:16.

3 Watkin, op. cit., p. 151.

sorrow, suffering, and death, the greatest victory was won. Love indeed is kind. And as Helen C. White says:

> It was this appreciation of divine love condescending and of human love yearning for intimacy that led Crashaw to dwell so tenderly on the least aspects of the human life of Christ.[1]

For Crashaw learned early that "faith converts the minde to God: but it is love and charitie that converts the heart and will to God ...."[2] No wonder he could write:

> Lord, when the sense of thy sweet grace
> Sends up my soul to seek thy face.
> Thy blessed eyes breed such desire,
> I dy in love's delicious fire
> . . . . . .
> Still live in me this loving strife
> Of living Death and dying Life.[3]

Moreover, the mysticism of Crashaw is seen in the way he thinks of death. Watkins states that "the death which he celebrates is the mystic death 'of love', ever renewed life...."[4] He further states that

> He will think of death, but only in terms of life. And our Lord's death he will envisage only as the source of this new deathless life.[5]

For Crashaw, there is really no death, because if one dies, it is not he who dies but Death. He states it as follows: "When my king did bleed,/ Life seemed to dy, Death dy'd indeed."[6] It reminds one of Donne's lines: "One

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[1] H. C. White, The Metaphysical Poets (New York, 1936), p. 236.

[2] Robert Shelford, Five Pious and Learned Discourses (Cambridge, 1635), pp. 96-97, quoted by H. C. White, op. cit., p. 221.

[3] "A Song", ll. 1-4, 13-14.

[4] Watkin, op. cit., p. 150.

[5] Ibid., p. 151.

[6] "The Office of the Holy Cross. The Ninth," ll. 19-20.

short sleep past, we wake eternally,/ And death shall no more: Death, thou shalt die."[1] Therefore, Crashaw writes,

> So from his living, and life giving Death
> My dying life may draw a new, and never fleeting Breath.[2]

Consequently, the death of Chirst, to him, gives eternal life. And if there is any death at all, it is the death of the soul, which can be killed again and again. As Austin Warren states it:

> The death of the body is common to all; but the death of the soul ... is the high privilege of the elect whom God has chosen to wound and inflame till they are all wound, one flame.[3]

Crashaw feel that Chirst conquered death, and now there can be only death--that which one feels from the wounds God gives. He believes that he can taste the death here. For as death to the mystics is only a change in location, the other location being the Real, so it is to Crashaw. Crashaw dies from the wound(s) trust upon him. Listen to him as he speaks:

> Thou art love's victime; and must dy
> A death more mysticall and high.
> Into love's armes thou shalt let fall
> A still-surviving funerall.[4]

And

> Let the King
> Me ever into these his cellars being
> Where flowes such wine as we can have of none
> But Him who trod the wine-presse all alone.
> Wine of youth, life, and the sweet Deaths of love ....[5]

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1 John Donne, "Death," ll. 13-14.

2 "The Recommendation," ll. 7 f.

3 Warren, op. cit., p. 145.

4 "A Hymn to ... Saint Teresa," ll. 75-78.

5 "An Apologie for the Fore-Going Hymn," ll. 37-41.

"To live the mystical life is to die, not in a moment, but throughout a life, at the hand of not an enemy but a lover."[1]

One other thing characterizes the mysticism of Crashaw--his change in religion from Protestant to Catholic. Laudian high churchmanship allowed him to worship in a Catholic vein, because Laudianism was Catholic in all but name. However, it did not thoroughly fulfill his religious desires. Yet, as Austin Warren states,

> ... he must have found in Peterhouse, under Cosins, a systematic atmosphere in which to practice a life of devotion according to Catholic models.[2]

Perhaps this was true, because at St. Mary's there were paintings on the windows, statues at the altar, and other ornaments in the church such as sculptures of angels, saints, and the Master.

However, these devotional practices convinced Crashaw that the Catholic Church offered him what he wanted. And as Holliday writes,

> ... at length he felt that he found such ... /in/ the Catholic fold. Slowly, indeed, the conviction grew upon him; but as he read the heroic lives of the early saints and studied the order, the customs, and the symbolism of the mighty Roman Church, the vastness and the majesty of the institution seized upon his imagination, and he at last himself gladly, whole-heartedly, a believer in the persecuted faith.[3]

It was the saints' lives but particularly the symbolism that stirred him to become a Catholic.

There were two other things that caused him to become a Catholic. One was the fact that Crashaw was troubled about his religion. Austin Warren

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1 Warren, op. cit., Richard Crashaw, A Study in Baroque Sensibility (Louisiana State, 1939), p. 146.

2 Warren, op. cit., "The Mysticism of Richard Crashaw," p. 144.

3 Holliday, op. cit., p. 112.

states that

> What must have troubled Crashaw is what, by his own statement, troubled Cressy. Anglicanism, even of the Laudian school, did little to provide for the needs of those who heard and longed to obey the Lord's words, "Be perfect." Its energy was spent in defending, against Puritan vituperation, the bare essentials of a reformed Catholicism. But Rome was the mother of the saints and the mystics ... Rome had its "spiritual directors" under whose tutelage devout souls could make progress in mental prayer and meditation. It had its monasteries where the contemplative might pass his days in learning to despise himself and adore his God ....[1]

This certainly could satisfy Crashaw: to love and worship God with all his mind, soul, and body was his desire.

The other was the few symbols that Crashaw had were destroyed by Dowsing. Watkins notes that

> ... host of ... cherubim, crucifixes, and popes in Crashaw's homes of prayer, Peterhouse Chapel and Little St. Mary's. This drove him from his contentful kingdome...."[2]

For what Crashaw wanted to do was to satisfy his religious needs through meditation and prayer. Moreover, he wanted to join himself to the communion of the saints and the mystics. And he felt that he could do this best through the symbols of the Catholic Church. He believed that by taking the symbols and picturizing scenes and dwelling on them continuously for a period of time, it was possible to reach union with God. In addition, he believed in transubstantiation, which Protestants did not believe in. Consequently, we find that he becomes a Catholic because of the symbols, including the

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1 Warren, op. cit., "The Mysticism of Richard Crashaw," p. 144-45.

2 Watkin, op. cit., p. 140.

Catholic belief in the Sacrament, which the Catholic Church offered him to pray and meditate on.

Crashaw's frequent use of wine and blood gives his mysticism symbolical significance. And as Catholics meditated on the mystery of the Eucharist, so does Crashaw, if not more.

> O! let me suck the wine
> So long of this chast vine
> Till drunk of the dear wounds, I be
> A lost Thing to the world, as it to me.[1]

He certainly thinks of wine as the love of Christ, the blood flowing from His side on the Cross. And he no doubt thought more of it each time he took the Sacrament in the Catholic Church, because he probably felt what Christ felt on the Cross.

Moreover, his symbolic use is further understood when it is realized that he is Baroque in his use of wine, wound, and blood. The artist of the seventeenth century dwelled on such, "but the blood and wounds ... attest love ...."[2]

Notice his use of bread and wine in the following:

> O dear memoriall of that Death
> Which lives still, and allowes us to breathe!
> Rich, Royall food! Bountyfull Bread!
> Whose use denyes us to the dead;
> Whose vitall gust alone can give
> The same leave both to eat and live;
> Life ever Bread of loves, and be
> My life, my soul, my surer selfe to mee.[3]

And

> But lest That dy too, we are bid.
> Ever to doe what he once did.

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[1]"Sancta Maria Delorum, or the Mother of Sorrows," ll. 101-104.

[2]Watkins, op. cit., p. 153.

[3]"Adoro Te," ll. 37-44.

> And by a mindfull, mystic breath
> That we may live, revive his Death;
> With a well bles't bread and wine.
> Transsum'd, and taught to turn divine.
> . . . . . .
> B' a nobler Bread, more needfull Blood
> . . . . . .
> The children's Bread; the Bridegroom's wine.[1]

He no doubt thought of the wine and the bread as he meditated in the Roman Catholic Church. And many nights he must have done as St. Francis:

> ... rose up from his bed and set himself
> to pray, lifting up his hands and eyes to
> heaven, and with exceeding great devotion ...
> said, "My God, my God!" and thus saying and
> sorely weeping ... abode till morning, always
> repeating, "My God, my God" and naught beside.[2]

but

> Live Jesus, Live and let it bee
> My Life, to dye for love of thee.[3]

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[1]"Lauda Sion Salvatorem. The Hymn for the B. Sacrament," ll. 25-30, 36, 63.

[2]Little Flowers, Chapter IV, p. 4, quoted in R. M. Jones, op. cit., p. 151.

[3]"The Authors Motto."

CHAPTER III

CRASHAW'S MYSTICISM AND POETIC TECHNIQUE

We have stated in the previous chapter that the poet, through the use of certain techniques, tries to give or suggest that which he cannot describe. As a result, he uses all means available and known to him to set forth what he tries to express. Crashaw is no exception, for his poetic technique is suggestive of,as well as interwoven with, his mysticism. In fact, as Watkin states,

> 'There is a two-fold meaning ... in every creature, a literal and a mystical, and the one is but the ground of the other.' Consciously or subconsciously the artist sees the mystical meaning in the literal and expresses it by his selection and combination of forms.[1]

And so it is with Crashaw.

The poet uses words in two ways to express the mystical meaning. One is for their sound, and the other is for their meaning. The sound, like music, suggests "an obscure significance incapable of conceptual formulation." The meaning is suggestive of that "which cannot be exactly defined," "forms pregnant with dim but potent reference to spiritual reality."[2]

The mystic-poet uses words in these ways because the mystic's experience is an experience of a union with God as He transcends all forms, whether images or concepts. The Spirit is aware of Absolute Reality. But because it is aware of Absolute Reality, the spirit cannot say what It is.[3]

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[1]Watkin, op. cit., p. 4.

[2]Ibid., p. 5.

[3]Ibid., p. 12.

Consequently, the craft that Crashaw uses is allied to his mysticism.

One poetic technique of his that is related to his mysticism is derived from the art of meditation. Some of his poems begin with a question, provocative phrase, or an introductory similitude; or they pose a problem or praise God for benefits bestowed upon us; or make a statement. Each causes a picture to be formed. And Crashaw's poems seem to follow the advice given to poets by St. Ignatius, whose Spiritual Exercises influenced religious life throughout Europe tremendously, that the poet use the image-forming faculty to provide a concrete mind setting for a meditation on invisible things.[1]

> What bright soft thing is this
> Sweet Mary thy fair eyes expense?[2]
>
> Lord, what is man? Why should he cost thee
> So dear: What hath his ruin lost thee?[3]
>
> Hark! she is call'd, the parting houre is come
> Take thy Farewell, poor world! heav'n must doe home.[4]
>
> They that have left thee naked, Lord, O that they had!
> This Garment too I would they had deny'd.[5]
>
> Rise, thou best and brightest morning!
> Rosy with a double Red;
> With thine own blus thy cheeks adorning
> And the dear drops this day were shed.[6]

All of these beginnings of the poems cause one to form a picture or to recall a scene, especially after one realizes whom or what one poet is writing

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1 Martz, op. cit., p. 12.

2 "The Teare", ll. 1 f.

3 "Charitas Nimia or the Dear Bargain," ll. 1 f.

4 "In the Glorious Assumption of our Blessed Lady," ll. 1 f.

5 "Unpon the Body of our Bl. Lord, Naked and Bloody," ll. 1 f.

6 "New Year's Day," ll. 1-4.

about from the title of the poem. This indeed is the result of the poet's emphasizing that a picture be formed for one to meditate upon in the practice of meditation. For many books on meditation prescribed minutely how and why that should be done, and it was not until the middle of the seventh century that the steps varied some. So, at this time, people followed rigidly the rules set down, at least for the start of meditation. Thus, "practices of 'composition' or 'proposing' lie behind the vividly dramatized, ... graphically imaged openings...,"[1] with Crashaw following the tradition.

Moreover, having the situation clearly outlined before him, he elaborates on and/or analyses the situation by piling image upon image, every possible image that he can to surround his subject, idea or object. He dwells upon the particular object the composition holds for him, and "one image gives rise only to another."[2] "On the Wounds of Our Crucified Lord," "The Name Above Every Name, the Name of Jesus," and "The Weeper" are examples of this. In addition, he loses the "sense of his own moods in the consciousness of the opus operatum,"[3] "trying to rise into, to lose himself in" the love and loveableness of God."[4] Thus, Crashaw's poems have a series of emotional scenes because he keeps his eye on his object, picturing all that he could in order to understand and/or analyze the composition before him.

Therefore, an amassing of imagery around an object can be directly attributed to his practice of image-forming to understand a compsotion. For though the composition is before him, he analyzes it by picturing many facets in

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[1] Martz, Poetry of Meditation (New Haven, 1954), p. 31.

[2] Joan Bennett, Four Metaphysical Poets (Cambridge, 1954), p. 99.

[3] H. J. C. Grierson (ed), Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century: Donne to Butler (Oxford, 1928), Introduction, p. xvii.

[4] White, op. cit., p. 250-51.

particular. And it is his following of the art of meditation, which prescribe such, that lies behind the abundant amount of imagery in any poem of length. It is not surprising then, to hear Holliday state that

> For many lines he wanders along in a veritable slough of despond, as far as beauty of thought is concerned, when suddenly the wonders of his theme kindle his imagination, and then come lines of soaring rapture....[1]

The truth is that Crashaw, still following the art of meditation, keeps his eye on his object, and, in all probability, simply wrote in a whirl and a rush as the pictures formed in his mind. Why not? Not interested in logicalness, as far as imagery is concerned, but in the sensation produced by the images, he could write one image after another. For what he really wanted was the sensational feeling.

Hence, the enormous amount of imagery that we get in his poems is due to visualization stressed in the art of meditation, which he practiced to reach the mystical state.

And, of course, the "soaring rapture" comes in the final section of the poem, when the Memory, the Understanding, and the Will are integrated and some type of resolution is reached, when the soul of man is lifted up to speak with God and hear God speak to man in turn.

It is no different in the art of meditation, because it is in the final stage that the meditator loses himself in his subject, subjecting his will to the Will of God. It is also in this stage as in the poems, that rapture is experienced.

Accordingly, the three sections that Crashaw's poems may be divided into are analogous to the three steps in the art of meditation: the composition

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[1] Holliday, op. cit., p. 117.

or situation, and analysis of the composition or situation, and a coloquy with God or resolution of the situation. And these sections are found that way in his poems because, practicing the art of meditation, it was a carry-over into his poetry when he wrote to lift souls to heaven. Consequently, the three sections that some of his poems may be divided into follow the meditative structure, and the astounding amount of imagery surrounding one object in his poems is attributable to his practice to reach the mystical state. What better method could be used to lift the reader "some yards above the ground... upon the wings of meditation" hwere he could "talk freely of God, and of that other state," when the soul is in tune to a heavenly pitch"?[1]

Crashaw's use of words symbolically is allied to his mysticism too. It is also due in part to his practice of the art of meditation. For in Rome during the seventeenth century, the arts and emblem books of the Jesuits, used for religious instruction, had all of the themes that Crashaw used.

> In this pictorial world will be found, urged with sensual power, all the themes which compelled the baroque imagination: angels and cherubs, the Infant Jesus, the shepherds and kings doing homage to the Nativity, the Circumsision, the crucified Saviour from whose wounds flow water and blood, the Sacred Heart, the Pieta, the Assumption of the Mater Dei, the weeping Magdalene, the ecstatic Teresa, the Holy Innocents, the ripe men of Martyrdom, the mystics receiving the stigmata or swooning in trances or carried into the seventh heaven, hearing the music of angels, and, finally, the Day of Judgement when this globe dissolves into ashes and the trumpet of doom ... calls the soul to final separation.[2]

Furthermore, Crashaw was familiar with them, because the emblem books were

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[1] Quotations were taken from the preface to Steps to the Temple.

[2] Austin Warren, Richard Crashaw, A Study in Baroque Sensibility (Louisiana State Press, 1939), p. 63.

available at the Little Gidding Community he frequented. And these emblem books with pictures drawn were used to convey moral and spiritual truths, portraying human figures against a realistic background.

The artists who created these works were assigned their subjects by religious leaders. Accordingly, the subjects they treated reflect the religious life at this time. These baroque works also reflect Catholic attitudes toward the arts. For Catholics believed that the senses and the imagination should be dedicated to God, since they are part of man. "The lower may officiate to the higher."[1] Baroque art was a result of the work of man's senses and imagination. And since heaven is unsurpassed in beauty, cannot man give God that which he does not need, to adorn His sanctuary? After all, God's Church should be above our own homes. Should not baroque art be included then?

In addition, through these beautiful images of the supernatural, the Catholic sees the ascent of man to God. Thus, the arts in the seventeenth century were used by the Catholics and those with Catholic tendencies for ascent to God.

Moreover, the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius that entered England during the flood of meditative books had a great influence throughout Europe, and it "authorized the 'Application of the Senses" to all the themes of religion."[2]

The exercises he proposed for meditation necessitated that one use all of his senses: seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling.

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1 Austin Warren, Richard Crashaw, A Study in Baroque Sensibility (Louisiana State Press, 1939), p. 63.

2 Ibid., p. 66.

But all themes contemplated upon the complete range of the senses could not be applied. As a result, pictorial or symbolic forms were developed. These symbolic or pictorial forms are akin to the portrayal of the debate between the body and soul, the Seven Deadly Sins, vices and virtues, and others. This method of visualization for meditation is synonymous with the emblem books of the Jesuits, the order that dominated Catholicism in seventeenth century England.

The emblems portrayed truths in metaphors by portraying human figures in some symbolic action with a realistic background. Thus, the emblem books were media of religious instruction. And these books, too, from all appearances of the paintings of Crashaw were available to him. Furthermore, they were cherished at Little Gidding which he visited often. Thus, it is likely that the material world served to represent the spiritual world for him.

And these emblem books influenced the writer of religious poetry because they

> ...lent themselves both to the extended and the contracted conceit, to the elaborate development of one figure or the phantasmagorical succession of many. If one meditated upon a single emblem and sought to express it in poetry, the consequence might be a short allegory; ... on the other hand, ...one would see a hundred metaphors to body forth the same object or conception.[1]

The extended metaphor in Crashaw's "Prayer" in lines two through twenty-two is an excellant example. Besides, they also lent themselves to be used as a guide for symbols. Crashaw's designs of headpieces to his poems in the "Carmen Deo Nostro" section would indicate this. These designs would also

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[1] Austin Warren, Richard Crashaw, A Study in Baroque Sensibility (Louisiana State Press, 1939), p. 75.

give an indication of his mystical states.

As a result, we find that Crashaw uses a number of symbols consciously or unconsciously, which shows his mysticism. And, of course, being irresistibly attracted to the symbolism and the ritual of the Roman Catholic Church was of no small significance.[1] Being a poet of the Baroque school, too, he insisted on the conciliation of the natural and the supernatural in art and the beauty of the universe to suggest analogically, spiritual significance of life here and hereafter.

Thus, certain images recur in his poetry preponderously: tears (water), blood (wounds), wine, and milk. All of these liquids are used because they have a special significance for Crashaw. Each of these in one way or the other reminds him of Christ, especially the Crucifixion and the Sacrament. It is said that when Jesus was pierced in the side both water and blood came out. And in the Sacrament to remember Him, we are instructed to drink wine, which is His blood, and wash each other's feet (water) for purity and to show love for one another. (It is evident that Crashaw was aware of this because, while in school, he had to write Latin poems on some phase of the New Testament--the life of Christ, of course, not being omitted). If Christ is the "living water," if He paid His blood for us, and the wine becomes the blood of Jesus, the water, blood, milk, and wine represent mystical states for Crashaw. His titles as well as some of his poetic statements suggest that water and blood are important to him. Notice the title of some of his poems,

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[1] R. L. Megroz, "Crashaw," Francis Thompson, The Poet of Earth in Heaven (London, [n.d.]), p. 111.

"Upon the Crown of Thorns Taken Downe from the Head of Our Blessed Lord, All Bloody."

"Saint Mary Magdalene, or the Weeper."

"Sancta Maria Dolorum or the Mother of Sorrows."

"The Tear."

"Our Blessed Lord in His Circumcism to His Father."

"On the Wounds of Our Crucified Lord."

"Upon the Bleeding Crucifix. A Song."

"Our Crucified, Lord, Naked and Bloody."

and his poetic statements,

N'ere wast thou in a sense so sadly true,
The Well of Living Waters, Lord, till now.[1]

O let me suck the wine.[2]

From thy hands and from thy side
All the purple Rivers meet.[3]

Thee with thy self they have too richly clad;
Opening the purple wardrobe in thy side.[4]

Ah this way bend thy benign floud
To'a bleeding Heart that graspes for blood.
That blood, whose least drops soveraign be
To wash my worlds of sin from me.[5]

All of these lead one back to the Cross-the Cross that Christ had to bear on Calvary. Indeed, such a preoccupation with these liquids in such a manner suggest life given as a result of Christ's death.

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1 "Upon the Bleeding Crucifix, A Song," ll. 37 f.

2 "Sancta Maria Dolorum or the Mother of Sorrows," ll. lll.

3 "Upon the Bledding Crucifix, A Song," ll. 3 f.

4 "Upon the Bloody Body of Our Blessed Lord, Naked and Bloody," ll. 3 f.

5 "Adoro Te," ll. 47 f.

Austin Warren gives a summary of Crashaw's symbolic use of fluids as well as implies how his mysticism is set forth by their use when he states that

> Crashaw's liquids are water (tears, penitence); milk (maternal succor, nutrition); blood (martyrdom on the part of the shedder, tranference of vitality to the recipient); wine (religious inebriation, ecstasy). Fluid, they are constantly mixing in ways paradoxical or miraculous. In one of his earliest poems, a metrical version of Psalm 137, blood turns into water. In one of the latest, "Sancta Maria," "Her eyes bleed Tears, his wound weep Blood." From the side of Christ, crucified, flowed an "amorous flood of Water wedding Blood." The angels, preparing for a feast, come with crystals phials to draw from the eyes of the Magdalene "their master's Water: their own Wine." Milk and blood may mingle, as when maternal love induces self-sacrifices; water turns to wine when tears of penitence become the happy token of acceptance and union; wine is transubstantiated into blood in the Sacrament; blood becomes wine when, "drunk of the dear wounds," the apprehender of Christ's redeeming sacrifice loses control of his faculties in an intoxication of gratitude and love.[1]

Indeed the symbolism sets forth his mysticism. If "water turns to wine when tears become the happy token of acceptance and union," and the wine, according to Catholic belief, turns to the blood of Christ, there is certainly union of man with God.

> ...Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting LIFE.[2]

"Everlasting life" refers only to Time, Eternity, Infinity--only known when the Infinite is known.

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[1] Austin Warren, Richard Crashaw, A Study in Baroque Sensibility (Louisiana State Press, 1939), p. 188.

[2] St. John 4:14.

Again, if milk is equal to nutrition, this is also an experience of Reality for Crashaw. For example, when a baby sucks the breasts of its mother for nourishment, it certainly tastes (through the milk) and feels (as he sucks on the nipples of his mother's breasts) its mother. Likewise, we experience God through Christ who has made it possible for us to be united again to the Divine. As Jesus states it, according to St. John,

> ...My father giveth you the true bread from heaven.
> For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world.
> . . . . . .
> ...I am the bread of life: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.[1]

Could Crashaw want better nourishment? And as St. John writes of Jesus, after the Hews asked this question: "How can this man give us <u>his flesh</u> to eat?" saying,

> Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.
>
> Whoso eatheth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life ...
> For my flesh is meat indeed and my blood is drink indeed.
> He that eatheth my flesh, and drinketh my blood dwelleth in me, and I in him.[2]

Crashaw believes that by taking the Sacrament Christ dwells in him and he in Christ. Bread, representing His flesh, and wine, His blood, is the best meal for a Crashaw. Christ dwells "in him" and he in Christ whenever communion is taken. This indeed is a foretaste of the Supreme Being. And

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1 St. John 6:32-33, and 35.

2 St. John 6:53-56.

as Martz writes,

> Not only the specifically eucharistic poems but all the many references to the wounds of Christ that we find in the poetry of ... Crashaw ... may be taken as brief acts of mental communion along with the poems we find specifically devoted to the wound in Christ's side.[1]

Liquids inevitably lead one back to the Sacrament or the Cross. This, of course, is due to Crashaw's belief in the union of the human and the Divine when communion is taken. Is this mysticism? Crashaw would say: "These are my hints that I have tried to give of my taste of Eternity."

Crashaw's use of other symbols show his mysticism also. "Lamb," "dove," the color "red," "sweet," and "Delicious," and "fire" are words used often. The lamb and dove refer to Christ: "Eternal Dove," "Dread Lamb," "Turtle Dove," and "the Lamb" are names Crashaw gives to Christ as He comes to unite man again to God. His color most frequently used, red (blood or wound), always draws one's mind to the blood of Christ, to the "fountain filled with blood" where we lose "our guilty stains" and become part of the God-head. And the numerous references to "wounds" only remind one of the color red. "Sweet" and "delicious" are associated with "tastes" of the Divine, too. His "sweetest Lippes," "sweet from you," "Your sweetness," "sweet ... pain," "tast Thee," "Delicious Deaths," all of these relate to Crashaw's experience with the Absolute. They express his union with the Absolute.

Fire, of course, is God's love for man. "O Mother turtle-dove!/Soft source of love," "love's fire," "Love touch't her heart and lo it beates/ High, and burns with such brave heates,"/ and "holy fires," when viewed in

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[1] Martz, Poetry of Meditation, op. cit., p. 91.

their context, show fire to be the love of God for man, through which God and man touch each other.

Besides his use of symbols, the sense of touch through certain terms and particularly the "wound of love," embodies his mysticism. As Austin Warren puts it,

> The supremities of touch ... are experienced in the mystical "wound of love," in martyrdom, and in nuptial union. In the former states torment and pleasure mix; the pains are delicious; the joys intolerable.[1]

Other terms show his sense of touch and intimacy with the One, also. Such words as "Spouse," "Bridegroom," "embrace," "kisses," "divine annihilations," "bosom," "brest," and "receiving mouth" hint of his close experience with the Creator.

His use of oxymoron also shows his mysticism. The oxymora correspond to the wounds of love. Thus, they too show Crashaw's mysticism. "Sweet and subtle pain," "fires and floods," and "bitter sweet things" are all associated with his experience of suffering and happiness at the same time when thee and thee Father unite momentarily.

His use of sense of taste, which we have mentioned, also shows his mysticism: sweets, nests of sweets, wine, and bread. These refer to eating, but eating Christ. "I am the Bread of life," He said. Wine is sweet, and He instructed us to eat the bread and drink wine in remembrance of Him. These turn to his body and blood, respectively. Therefore, Crashaw experiences God again, Christ being one of the Trinity.

Co-joined with his mysticism too is his use of paradox. Nevertheless,

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[1] Warren, Richard Crashaw, A Study in Baroque Sensibility, op. cit., p. 189.

one must remember that his poems

> ...sprang from a passionate and very concrete realization of the presence of Christ as revealed in the incidents of his life and in the symbols of worship.[1]

For it is in Christ's life and the Sacrament particularly that his mysticism abounds. Also to be kept in mind is the fact that he tries to present mystical states of his religious moods. What else would he use to lift souls to the heavens?

In his use of paradox, we at once move to the heart of his mysticism--the union of the human and the Divine. For though the paradox may be contrary to received opinion or seemingly contradictory or opposed to common sense, it is in reality a fact.

Paradox, while seemingly untrue, gives facts about Crashaw's mysticism. Note the following passage:

> Welcome my Grief, my Joy, how deare's?
> . . . . . .
> Thou, thou (Dear Lord) even thou alone,
> Giv'st joy, even when thou givest none.[2]

In this epigram, one gleams a foreshadowing of the "wound of love." In fact, it points to that only because it is in the "wound of love" that God causes grief as well as joy. And as Helen C. White stated, it is in Steps to the Temple, in which this epigram is found, that we get out first shades of the mysticism of Crashaw.[3] The passage is indeed paradoxical, for common sense would certainly make one aware that joy cannot be given when it is not given.

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1 Edwin Mims, op. cit., p. 26.

2 "Verily I say unto you, ye shall weep and lament," ll. 1, 5 and 6.

3 White, op. cit., p. 231.

Yet, a truth remains, especially to the mystic, because when pains hurt the body, one usually grieves. But just as the doctor may perform an operation which may cause agonizing pain but at the same time makes one happy or joyous because such will help, cannot an individual experience exultation while he grieves?

Another paradoxical epigram hints of his mysticism too-"Blessed be the Paps which thou hast sucked." In these lines of the epigram, "Hee'l have his Teat e're long, a bloody one,/ The mother then must suck the son,"[1] part of his mysticism is found. For here Christ is suppose to be sucking his mother's "Teat"; the sucking she will do will be to suck blood from her son. Wine turns into the blood of Christ. If one drinks the wine that turns to the blood of Christ, he indeed experiences Reality or through this comes to know and/or feel himself in the Trinity.

And in "On the Wounds of our Crucified Lord," we see his mysticism through paradox and antithesis.

> O these wakefull wounds of thine!
> Are they Mouthes? Or are they eyes?
> Be they mouthes, or be they eyes,
> Each bleeding part some one supplies.

These bleeding wounds that supply are the wounds of Christ giving blood for everlasting life. One returns again to the belief in the Sacrament which becomes the body and blood of Christ once taken. If the wine turns to the blood of Christ, indeed, there is "Heaven in earth, and God in Man"--a union

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1 "Blessed be the Paps which thou hast sucked," ll. 3 and 4.

2 Kirby Neill, "Structure and Symbol in Crashaw's 'Hymn in the Nativity,'" PMLA, LXIII (1948), 102.

of the two. Involved too is the paradox of the Incarnation, for here, Jesus is both son and Savior of the Blessed Virgin. Yet, it was only through the Incarnation that the "reconciliation of the material and the spiritual, lost since Adam's sin, and mysteriously solved by Incarnation through the human Vessel"[2] could be restored to God. And as Kirby Neill has pointed out in his analysis of the "The Holy Nativity of Our Lord God," the Incarnation suggests that we apply the mystery of the Incarnation to ourselves. For after analyzing the poem in detail, he states the following:

> .../The poem develops/ the paradox of the Lamb of God who is the keeper of the shepherds, or, obliquely, the Lamb who is also the Good Shepherd ... The two final lines ... suggest (s) the proper response of man to love's Noon /Christ taking the form of humanity to become Savior/, the immolation of self in mystic union with God.

He states further that

> For, us then, this is the final reconciliation of the material with the spiritual, of union of heaven and earth, of the elevation of man after his fall to a renewed union with God through Incarnation of His Son.[1]

If this is what Crashaw was suggesting, thinking of Christ in a concrete manner, it is very easy for him to think of Christ as entering his body to form a union. Thus, through paradoxes and antitheses, he informs us of the "Outgoings" of his soul. So, through the pattern of some of his poems and the imagery in them, symbolic use of words, the use of the senses, paradoxes, and antitheses, one finds the mysticism of Crashaw present.

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[1] Kirby Neill, op. cit., 102.

SUMMARY

The seventeenth century was one full of clashes, discoveries, ideas, and advancement. There was prosperity, expansion of knowledge, explorations, and discoveries. These changed man's view not only of himself but also of the universe, and at the same time, caused a decrease of faith in many and an increase of faith in others.

Science seemed to have also affected every phase of life to the extent that it led people either to become skeptics or mystics. Crashaw was one who retreated to mysticism, as a result of the effect of science. Other sources of his mysticism were his religious training, reading about the Church Fathers and the biographies of mystics, devotional and reverential practices at Little Gidding and in St. Mary's Chapel, and his own nature.

Besides, the nature of his mysticism may be determined from his practice of the art of meditation. His treatment of the "wound of love" like the mystics, contemplation on the life of St. Teresa, the way he thinks of love and death, and his belief in the symbols of worship (the Sacrament particularly) also shed light on his mysticism.

Furthermore, his poetic technique is not unrelated to his mysticism. By the division of some of his poems, by his symbolic use of words, by his sensuous use of images, by his use of oxymora, paradoxes, and antitheses, he embodies his mysticism.

The sources of Crashaw's mysticism, how it is characterized, and his poetic technique in his religious poems will help one understand that Crashaw was in touch with the Holy One periodically.

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